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ON TAP

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WATER AWARENESS MONTH

May is Water Awareness Month. Certainly, this year perhaps more than any year prior, we have been aware of water. With Southern California experiencing record rainfalls, it would be very difficult to not be aware of water.

Is the drought over?

This season's rainfall has been helpful to water districts that rely on local water supplies, but does it end the need for wise water use? Does it end the drought? Does it mean water will be plentiful for years to come? The realistic answer is "no."

A large portion of your drinking water is surface water imported by the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California. Metropolitan's imported water source is mostly Colorado River, with augmentation by the State Water Project from Northern California. The water levels in the Colorado River and its reservoirs are at record low levels. Experts estimate it would take 14 years of rainfall similar to this year to bring the water levels in the Colorado River, tributaries, and reservoirs back to abundant levels.

What is done locally, by TCWD, to decrease your dependency on imported water?

One strategy that has been very effective locally is the use of reclaimed water. TCWD owns and operates a wastewater treatment facility at the northern portion of Dove Canyon. This facility processes all the sewage produced by the communities that surround it (Dove Canyon, Robinson Ranch, Trabuco Highlands, Rancho Cielo, Walden, etc.). The wastewater treatment facility can produce an average of 800,000 gallons of highly treated reclaimed water daily. This reclaimed water is then used to irrigate common

area slopes for local homeowner associations and the golf course located in Dove Canyon. The recent Plano Median project on Plano Trabuco Road included an expansion of the reclaimed water line which will permit TCWD to supply reclaimed water to the communities of Rancho Cielo and Walden for irrigation of their common area slopes. The communities of Robinson Ranch, Dove Canyon, and Trabuco Highlands already use reclaimed water to irrigate much of their common areas. Dove Canyon and Trabuco Highlands are currently attempting to expand their use of reclaimed water to all of the common area slopes.

In addition to reducing the demand for imported water, the use of reclaimed water benefits both the communities and TCWD. How? The cost of reclaimed water in TCWD is approximately 75% of the domestic drinking water rate. This permits local homeowner associations to provide lower rates in their respective homeowner dues' structure. TCWD benefits because the reclaimed water is dispersed, allowing the wastewater treatment facility to function without concern of overflowing its reclaimed water reservoir.

Local Water Supply

During years when measurable rainfall occurs, TCWD is able to operate the two wells it owns. These wells, known as the Rose Canyon Well and the Lang Well, are located in the core of Trabuco Canyon. When there is plentiful rainfall, District-wide demand for domestic water decreases. This is particularly true during the colder months due to reduced residential landscaping demands. During these times, TCWD's wells can supply most of the domestic water demands. Also in these times, TCWD is usually able to purchase water from neighboring

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Santiago County Water District; this district is able to collect rain water and treat it for domestic use at their Harding Canyon Treatment Plant.

What can the local residential customer do to be water wise?

Most houses were planned and built with the expectation that the residents would use one Equivalent Dwelling Unit (EDU) of water each month. This is 13,464 gallons of water. In many instances throughout the District, homes use two to three times that amount. This is usually due to excessive landscape irrigation. During the warm months, a good portion of water is used for landscape irrigation. Regular inspection by homeowners of their irrigation system and their landscape can help conserve water, particularly in cases where water is flowing over the sidewalk and down the street. Over watering is a very wasteful and expensive practice.

In some portions of the District, customers can apply to be part of the Smart Timer Program offered by TCWD in cooperation with the City of Lake Forest and Municipal Water District of Orange County. This allows customers to have a satellite controlled irrigation timer that is programmed to irrigate according to current weather patterns. Currently, only residents of Portola Hills are eligible for this program and there is a cost involved to customers. Please call (949) 858-0277 for more information and reference Smart Timer.

TCWD's Board of Directors and staff recognize the importance of water management. Join us in conserving and protecting this most valuable resource—not just during Water Awareness Month, but throughout the year.

FIGHT THE BITE

As warm weather approaches, remember the “Five D’s” to defend yourself against West Nile virus.

DRAIN standing water in your backyard and neighborhood. Old tires, flower pots and clogged rain gutters are mosquito breeding sites.

DUSK & DAWN are the times of day you should try to stay indoors when mosquitoes are most active.

TCWD'S ON TAP

DOORS and windows should have “bug-tight” screens to help keep mosquitoes out of your home.

DRESS in long sleeves and pants when you're outside.

DEET is an ingredient to look for in your insect repellent. Always wear repellent when outdoors.

For more information, contact the Orange County Health Care Agency at ohealthinfo.com.

The Regular Board Meeting is held on the third Wednesday of each month at 7:00 p.m. at the District office located at 32003 Dove Canyon Drive, Trabuco Canyon. The public is encouraged to attend.

BOARD HIGHLIGHTS

- ◇ April 16, 2005 – Approved change orders for the Water Treatment Plant Backwash Clearwell Improvements Project.
- ◇ Approved Check 21 service with California Bank & Trust.
- ◇ Authorized support of the 2005 Future Scientists and Engineers of America Rocket Competition.
- ◇ Adopted a Community Facilities District Finance Policy.
- ◇ Received a status update relating to mutual benefits with Santiago County Water District.
- ◇ Directed staff to file a Notice of Exemption for upgrades at the District well site.
- ◇ Approved the Sub-Area Master Plan for the Saddleback Meadows development.
- ◇ Received a status update regarding the Audubon Dove Canyon Water Recovery Project.

ON TAP is published and distributed by TCWD. We welcome your comments, suggestions and questions. Please call or write
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